



Education, Neo-Colonial Style

In the second part of his essay called *“Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives on the Developmental Consequences of Education”*, Mike Cole is telling us quite plainly that the ideology underlying education in the era of neo-colonialism is racist and patronising, based on the assumption that unschooled people are not adults, and that what makes them adults, is schooling.

“C.P. Hallpike summarized decades of psychological research comparing the intellectual performance of educated and non-educated people of various ages on Piagetian and a wide variety of other cognitive tasks. With very few exceptions, the schooled participants outperformed those who had not attended school. These differences between schooled and non-schooled children

led him to conclude that most of the time, ‘primitives’ do indeed think like small children [Hallpike, 1979].”

Whereas Cole’s own findings, together with his colleagues Sharp and Lave, following research in Yucatan, Mexico, were:

“... the information-processing skills which school attendance seems to foster could be useful in a variety of tasks demanded by modern states, including clerical and management skills in bureaucratic enterprises, or the lower-level skills of record keeping in an agricultural cooperative or a well-baby clinic.”

In other words, school prepared the children for a capitalist society, and not for life in general.

The remainder of the text describes various means of “managing diversity” in schools. The four scenarios given by Cole towards the end of this excerpt are not hopeful.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Cole, Perspectives, Part 2, Post-Colonial Consequences, 2005.](#)
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